

Partnering for *Innovative* Efficiencies

Missouri Department of Transportation

June 2006

Dear Partner:

Thanks to all of you who participated in our second Partnering for Innovative Efficiencies meeting this April. Your time and efforts yielded many good ideas for improving utility relocations. So, in addition to our five action teams, we're now working on an additional list of your suggestions. Again, thanks for your help in improving Missouri's transportation system. I look forward to our continued partnership.

Pete K. Rahn
Director



Utility Relocation Partnering Meeting Results in Five Action Teams

It was a flurry of post-it notes at the second Partnering for Innovative Efficiencies meeting April 26 in Jefferson City. About 100 industry representatives and MoDOT staff gathered to look at ways to improve the process for relocating utilities with the goal of cutting costs and speeding highway projects. The suggestions were grouped into about a dozen topics and then voted upon to determine our top five actions to improve utility relocations. Five action teams are already meeting to address those key issues. They are:

- ▶ Involving utility partners earlier in projects by hosting informational meetings and including representatives on core teams.
- ▶ Acquiring utility right of way at the same time as obtaining roadway right of way whenever practical.
- ▶ Acquiring utility permits at the same time as obtaining permits for MoDOT's projects whenever practical.
- ▶ Developing a course on utility relocation procedures and practices for MoDOT designers and partners.
- ▶ Investigating an incentive program for relocating utilities in a timely fashion.

Other Great Ideas to be Investigated

In addition to the five action teams, we're also exploring the following recommendations offered at the April partnering meeting:

- Include utility relocation plans and existing utilities in the roadway plans.
- Continue to investigate the feasibility of joining Missouri Call One.
- Implement subsurface utility engineering on appropriate projects for utility mapping.
- Try the use of separate utility contracts.

- Revise specifications to allow alternative or additional materials to be used on utility relocations.
- Improve Communications
 - Establish an electronic communication framework between MoDOT and utilities by project; include permits and reports.
 - Set up e-mail communication groups between MoDOT and utilities by project.
 - Ensure all staff with utility relocation responsibilities have access to cell phones.

For more information and updates on these utility relocation suggestions and follow-up actions, visit our Web site at www.modot.org/pie



Dan Cannon with AT&T and Edward Stephen with the Federal Highway Administration help identify process improvements at the April 26 utility relocation partnering meeting.

Recruiting and Retaining Good Employees

At our first Partnering for Innovative Efficiencies last August, you told us retaining qualified staff was critical to delivering projects faster, better and cheaper. We also noted that this could be a challenge, especially for state government agencies. Like other departments, MoDOT struggles with being able to provide salaries that are competitive with private industry. One of our toughest challenges is hiring and retaining civil engineers, who are in high demand.

Even with these constraints, our partnering team identified four strategies for success. While the team's focus was on civil engineers, some of the strategies apply across our organization. They are:

- Increase pay for entry-level civil engineers;
- Develop an incentive pay program;
- Create a recruiting marketing strategy; and

continued ►



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- Encourage payment of full dues for employees to actively participate in various professional and civil engineering organizations to further MoDOT's mission.

Better yet, we've made some good progress toward implementing each strategy:

Increased Pay

In February, we increased the starting salary for graduate engineers by two half steps. Effective July 1, current entry and intermediate-level engineers will receive two additional half steps in pay.

Incentive Pay Program

We've developed a unique incentive pilot program called Performance Plus for employees in our construction project offices. They'll receive incentive pay if they achieve a final construction cost of one percent above the contract award amount (or less) on projects in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. If this pilot proves to be successful, we'll offer the program to all employees who can come up with ways to improve performance and cut costs. In the meantime, we'll continue to explore ways to give performance increases to employees who exceed expectations.

Recruiting Marketing Strategy

We're working to update the MoDOT Web site to make employee-related information more visible and user-friendly. We're also adding helpful information for potential job candidates, including video clips from employees saying why they like working for MoDOT, an in-depth benefits analysis, information about employee programs and links to general Missouri information.

Dues Payments

We've revised our policy to pay full dues for professional organizations that provide networking and continuing education credits.

For more information on how we're working to retain qualified employees, contact Kim Hickey, employment manager at (573) 751-8478 or kimberly.hickey@modot.mo.gov

Pay Raises Help Attract and Retain Quality Employees

Our effort to attract and retain employees is being helped by action taken in the recent state legislative session. The new state budget includes a four percent pay increase for all state employees. With the governor's signature and the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission's approval, the raise will take effect July 1.

Future Partnering Meeting – November 9, 2006

Our first two partnering meetings have been great successes. The innovative solutions we've developed with our partners are making a real difference. Why stop at just two? Our third partnering meeting is set for Nov. 9. Once the topic is finalized, invitations will go out in the mail.

For additional information about Partnering for Innovative Efficiencies please contact Margie Bramon at 573-526-5508 or Margaret.Bramon@modot.mo.gov